

*Carmel, NY* – Responding to a fully corroborated news report that New York has still not put absentee ballots for the upcoming elections into the hands to all its service men and women bravely serving our country overseas and here at home, Congressman John Hall (NY-19) demanded that the ballots be sent out immediately.

Last week, the New York State Board of Elections notified federal officials that absentee ballots for service members from New York City and four counties—Westchester, Putnam, Erie and Niagara—had not yet been mailed out, a problem that still had not been remedied as of Saturday, October 9. New York election officials asked for, and were granted, an extension until October 1 to send out the ballots, but missed this deadline as well.

“Once again, our service men and women are not being treated with the respect they deserve,” said Rep. Hall. “The right to vote is guaranteed for all Americans under our Constitution, and local bureaucrats dragging their feet to mail out absentee ballots is entirely unacceptable and also unlawful. Our soldiers serving proudly overseas should have the same opportunity to vote by absentee ballot as any other citizen. Every available plane, boat and vehicle should be used to deliver these absentee ballots to any service member who is without. I am calling on state and local officials in New York to expedite sending absentee ballots to our service members. This matter is too serious to be taken lightly, and the failure to comply with federal law, as directed, puts the fundamentals of our democracy—which we are asking our brave service women and men to uphold and protect—at risk.”

The MOVE Act, passed and signed into law in 2009, notes that states must send out military and overseas ballots 45 days prior to the date of the elections. Service members from New York City and the four aforementioned counties will now have just three weeks to receive their ballots, mark them and return them by post—an unfavorable time-frame when considering how long it takes mail to reach military personnel overseas, especially near forward lines of combat activities.